(c) if not, the measures proposed to close such tourist offices from abroad which could not promote tourism?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (KUMARI UMA BHARTI): (a) No, Sir. It is not correct that only 17 people from Buenos Aires visited India last year. During 1998, 3776 tourists arrived from Argentina.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Development of Kargil as a Tourist Centre

769. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether with the winding up of Kargil conflict, Government propose to convert Kargil into a tourist centre or a place of pilgrimage for the nation; and

(b) if so, the details of the plan and the steps taken in that direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (KUMARI UMA BHARTI): (a) and (b) The primary role for development of tourism in places of tourist importance is that of the State Governments. However, Ministry of Tourism strengthens their efforts by providing financial assistance for projects/schemes in consultation with them. Accordingly, for the year 1999-2000, 28 projects/schemes for an amount of Rs. 909.59 lakhs have been decided to be sanctioned for the State of Jammu & Kashmir. No project proposal for Kargil has been received from the State Government.

Development of Tourist Spots in Assam

770. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the places which have been developed as tourist spots in Assam during the last three years;

(b) whether Government is taking any action to develop tourist spots at Kaspur and Bubhan hill in southern parts of Assam or Barak Valley; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (KUMARI UMA BHARTI): (a) The main tourist spots in Assam for which Central Financial Assistance has been provided are: Guwahati, Kaziranga, Bhalukpong, Sibsagar, Kaliabhomora, Tezpur, Barpeta, Chandrapur, Lungsung, Silchar, Bokakhat, Jakhlabanda, Batadrava, Mangaldoi, Nagaon, Pobitara, Orang, Chapar, Pancharatna, Kamakhya and Kakopathar.

(b) and (c) Central Financial Assistance has been extended to the Government of Assam during 1998-99 for construction of Yatri Niwas at Bubhan hill at a project cost of Rs. 30.50 lakhs. A project for Yatri Niwas at Kashpur has been prioritized for the year 1999-2000 at a cost Rs. 30 lakhs.

Promotion of Tourism in Kerala

771. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Kerala has submitted any proposal for tourism promotion; and

(b) if so, the details thereof, and the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (KUMARI UMA BHARTI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The proposal is for marketing Kerala in Gulf and Singapore regions. The proposed items have been dove tailed with the ongoing programme of the concerned Government of India Tourist Offices.

Tourist Inflow

†772. SHRI RAGHAVJI: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the number of foreign tourists visited during the year 1997-98 and 1998-99 alongwith their estimated number during 1999-2000, State-wise;

(b) the steps being taken for attracting foreign tourists; and

† Original Notice of the Question was received in Hindi.